

1 I watched another fine show with Linda Ellerbee.
2 She was talking with a panel of older children about how to
3 avoid child kidnappers. They were viewing videos of actors
4 playing child kidnappers and they were talking about how to
5 avoid being put in danger. I was very impressed with the
6 content of this program because it's a very scary yet a very
7 important topic in America.

8 After watching this 2½ hours of programming and
9 reviewing the testimony and the history of children's
10 programming to date, I wanted to share this morning some
11 initial thoughts and some concerns that I have so that those
12 of you that are testifying today can try to address those
13 issues that I have in my mind.

14 First, I believe strongly that broadcasters do have
15 a duty to serve all substantial and important groups in their
16 community and that this includes children. It includes
17 children of all ethnicities. Because of children's lack of
18 experience, their intellectual sophistication and their very
19 special needs, children need programming that is designed for
20 them. How frightening it must be for a child to see shows
21 that are intended for adults. For example, news segments
22 showing today's bloodied corpses in Bosnia or shows showing
23 real police officers dealing with one violent or bloody crime
24 after another.

25 Yet children's programming has not thrived. I want

1 to know whether the Act has had the effect, the real effect of
2 encouraging more programming. I would like to see any updated
3 factual evidence detailing whether there's been any increase
4 in children's programming since the Act became effective.
5 What factors would prompt an increase in programming? Is
6 there any way of encouraging more kid's programming than
7 encouraging onerous quantitative regulations?

8 Second, I would like to throw the gauntlet down to
9 broadcasters and programmers to put their best creative minds
10 to the task of producing entertaining programs that also
11 contain educational and informational content. Parents turn
12 handsprings when there is well-produced educational kid's
13 programming. Given the incredible talent in this country in
14 the programming industry and the educational community that
15 stands ready to help, I believe such programming can be
16 accomplished if we put our hearts and our minds to it.

17 Third, how do we encourage broadcasters to make a
18 real commitment to not only producing but marketing kid's
19 programming? I've read evidence suggesting that kid's shows
20 are placed on the broadcaster's schedule during very early
21 morning hours when very few kids are up and that these shows
22 tend to be preempted the most. I think that kid's programming
23 should be placed in reasonable time slots on a consistent
24 basis. I'd like to see good faith marketing efforts so that
25 parents know when these shows are going to be on. They can

1 plan that programming as part of their child's day. Only then
2 can licensees hope to build up the kind of audience that will
3 make the show a commercial success and make it a win-win
4 situation for everybody.

5 Finally, I would like to welcome some creative
6 thought on how to encourage the production of more quality
7 kid's T.V. Shouldn't some of the financial burden be spread
8 outside the broadcast industry? It is possible to tap
9 corporate America to help in sponsoring children's
10 programming? Isn't it something that will help foster a new
11 generation of well educated young Americans. How can we
12 reward those broadcasters that produce outstanding
13 broadcasting?

14 Those are some of the questions and initial thoughts
15 that I have on this issue and I'd like to hear more. Thank
16 you very much.

17 CHAIRMAN HUNDT: Thank you. We're pleased to have
18 with us this morning Linda Ellerbee who's our impartial
19 moderator. Miss Ellerbee has written two best, best selling
20 books, writes a weekly syndicated newspaper column, is a
21 frequent speaker on various subjects including -- television.
22 And she is active in the production business.

23 We asked Miss Ellerbee to serve as our impartial
24 moderator in order to facilitate discussion among the
25 panelists. There are some who believe that some Commissioners

1 are reluctant to question. In the course of panels like this
2 there is the fear of seeming to be slanting one way or
3 another. Some may say that it's a little unlikely that this
4 particular Commission would be reluctant to engage in any sort
5 of spirited dialogue. But there is a concern on our part that
6 we not only be impartial but have the appearance of
7 impartiality. And, frankly, it's a lot easier I think to
8 learn when you're listening than when you're talking. So,
9 consequently, we appreciate very much having a moderator here
10 today to help us find neutral exploration of the issues. And
11 that's what Linda has agreed to do. And we thank you very
12 much for your contribution, Linda.

13 MS. ELLERBEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 CHAIRMAN HUNDT: I turn it over to you.

15 MS. ELLERBEE: Thank you very much. I am -- I feel
16 very honored to have the opportunity to be part of what is a
17 very important hearing today. While I realize the notion of
18 an impartial journalist may be somewhat antiquated, I will do
19 my best.

20 I would like to say this, though, it is very nice to
21 see that on a hearing concerning children's television, we
22 have some actual children in the room. We have a lot, in
23 fact, in this room that know a great deal about children's
24 television and we have someone who is not in this room who
25 also knows a great deal about children's television. And

1 perhaps that's why he's in the control room but he's going to
2 be here through the magic of television. Yo, Elmo, you there?

3 ELMO: I'm busy, Miss Ellerbee. I'm -- Sesame
4 Street -- a lot of important people from the FCC, NBC, and ABC
5 and PTA and CTW, are glad to be here today to talk about
6 making great television for children. Isn't that right?
7 That's right. So Elmo said he wanted to come here to talk
8 about great television shows because he's from COA, The
9 Children of Television. I don't have to tell you that the
10 children of America really love to watch good television, but
11 there's not enough of it. We want to see more. So please
12 talk alot about how to make more and then stop talking and
13 please do it for the children of America, that's COA. Now,
14 Elmo has to stop talking and take a nap. Thank you very much.
15 Bye-bye.

16 MS. ELLERBEE: Thank you, Elmo. Thank you for
17 staying --. Before we begin, I would like to point out to our
18 panelists that if you see the blue light go on, that means you
19 have a minute before the red light goes on. And, of course,
20 when the red light goes on, you finish the sentence or Lord
21 knows what will happen to you.

22 Okay. The first person we're going to hear from is
23 David Britt who is President and Chief Executive Officer of
24 Children's Television Workshop and Sheldon Turnipseed, an
25 actor who plays Jamal on Ghostwriter.

1 MR. BRITT: Thank you, Linda, Commissioners. I'd
2 like to file my statements for the record if I may. This
3 morning we're going to hear lots of economics, lots of
4 Constitutional law and probably more numbers than we get
5 Sesame Street on an average broadcast. It certainly will
6 qualify as educational programming. It remains to be seen if
7 it qualifies as compelling storytelling but we'll know that at
8 the end of the day.

9 Some obvious facts that I think get lost sometimes
10 in our debates. The fact is that there is lots of television
11 programming for kids out there and children watch lots and
12 lots of it. The fact is that too much of that programming is
13 junk, too much of it is worse than junk. The best research
14 and our own common sense tell us that children learn from
15 television. Whether they learn numbers, whether they learn
16 cooperation or whether they learn violence depends on what
17 programming your children's fond of.

18 The conventional wisdom is that children won't watch
19 educational programming. Well, Kevin Class and Sheldon
20 Turnipseed, or Elmo and Jamal of Ghostwriter to millions of
21 kids, can tell you that children watch, that they participate,
22 that they learn from quality educational programming and that
23 they learn from the role models that quality educational
24 programming provides.

25 Audience drives economics in commercial television

1 we understand. All the educational television programming
2 gets audience, it gets big audience. It can be economically
3 viable. It may not be as profitable or as easy as violence or
4 mayhem in action but it can be economically viable.

5 We recommend a process definition of educational
6 television. It is clear, it is doable and it is economic.

7 It avoids any hint of regulation and it avoids any
8 hint of censorship. It's got three or four simple steps in
9 it. First, educational programming should be developed with
10 the help of independent outside educational advisors. Second,
11 the goals of that programming should be written down. Third,
12 the product should be evaluated. And, finally and most
13 important, the public and the Commission should have access to
14 the record of what that programming has been through. That's
15 really all you need.

16 Children are the only future we've got in this
17 society. Like it or not, television is one of their most
18 important teachers. As parents or grandparents and educators
19 we know that television right now is hurting children more
20 than it's helping them. We need to change that.

21 The purpose of the Children's Television Act is to
22 put more constructive educational programming choices before
23 children. We don't need more studies. We don't need more
24 time. We don't need more research. We need to set standards.
25 We need to set some meaningful minimum times. The old proverb

1 | says that it takes a whole village to raise a child. Well,
2 | television is the main storyteller in our village. Broadcast
3 | television reaches every home. It speaks directly to every
4 | child. It is past time require that at least some of those
5 | stories provide compelling constructive education for
6 | children.

7 | Sheldon, why don't you give us your perspective?

8 | MR. TURNIPSEED: Thank you. Members of the
9 | Commission, distinguished fellow panelists, ladies and
10 | gentlemen, I am Sheldon Turnipseed. I play Jamal on a weekly
11 | suspense series designed to help children read and write with
12 | increased skill, confidence and enjoyment, Ghostwriter. I am
13 | an actor but I don't live in Beverly Hills. I live in Crown
14 | Heights, Brooklyn. Ghostwriter isn't filmed in Hollywood.
15 | It's filmed on location in New York City. So, while my frame
16 | of reference is, of course, Ghostwriter, it's also that of an
17 | urban teenager.

18 | I first want to echo Mr. Britt's points about
19 | television's potential to educate and by educate I mean more
20 | than numbers and letters, more than science and math, more
21 | than changing colors. I mean the social messages television
22 | conveys or more accurately, perhaps, doesn't convey. The
23 | context and consequences of actions in everyday life. Most
24 | kid's shows portray life too perfectly. It's not a big deal
25 | when a kid does something right and much in the same way, it's

1 not a big deal when a kid does something wrong. Everything is
2 solved neatly in half an hour. All is somehow forgiven, a
3 happy seamless ending, a pretty package with a bow. Real life
4 isn't like this. Try as we may, violence will find us.
5 Turmoil will find us. Kids need and want shows that make us
6 think. We don't want our intelligence insulted and we don't
7 want to be patronized.

8 We have different choices -- we have difficult
9 choices, excuse me. We need more shows like Ghostwriter that
10 model the building blocks of decision making, not bullets that
11 model a multicultural cast working in harmony, not hatred,
12 that model reading and writing as an integral to -- as an
13 integral part of daily life, not incidental.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. ELLERBEE: Next we will hear from Jeanette Trias
16 who is President of ABC Television Children's Entertainment.

17 MS. TRIAS: Good morning. My name is Jenny Trias
18 and I'm President of ABC Children's Entertainment and the ABC
19 Television Network of Capital Cities ABC, Inc.

20 I'd like to tell you why I believe that the
21 Commission's current definition of educational and
22 informational programming is the right one. I will also give
23 you my views on why short form programs are deserving of
24 primary educational credit.

25 The current FCC standards requires that the program

1 be specifically designed to serve either the intellectual
2 needs or social needs of children 16 and under. In my
3 opinion, the standard is concrete enough to guide broadcasters
4 in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Children's Act
5 and at the same time flexible enough to respond in -- flexible
6 enough to respond -- excuse me -- flexible enough to allow
7 producers and broadcasters the freedom to respond in creative
8 and diverse ways to the programming challenge. On the other
9 hand, I believe that the alternative definition that the
10 Commission proposed in its Notice of Inquiry, that a program
11 must have education as a "primary objective" with
12 entertainment as a "secondary goal" would undermine the goals
13 of creativity and diversity.

14 The Children's Television Workshop put the issue
15 very well in its written comments of last year, effective
16 educational programming must first reach before it can teach.
17 If a program is lacking in entertainment value, not enough
18 children will watch to attract the advertising revenue
19 necessary for commercial survival. And it is not just a
20 matter of money. A program is not effective in teaching
21 unless children are attempted -- attentive to what they are
22 watching. Children pay more attention when their emotions are
23 engaged by strong characters, good stories and the utilization
24 of entertainment techniques such as music, sound effects and
25 eye-catching graphics.

1 A standard that allows for the use of entertainment
2 techniques will not open the floodgates to entertainment
3 programs that merely tack on a pro-social message. Under the
4 current standard, a program must be specifically designed to
5 serve an educational need. To me, that means the broadcaster
6 must be able to demonstrate that the program had a clearly
7 articulated plan to achieve an educational goal. The
8 Commission can test the broadcaster's good faith by asking
9 what the educational plan is and what steps were taken to
10 ensure it is carried out.

11 There are many ways that can be done. At Cap
12 Cities/ABC, we assign a Broadcast Standards director and
13 editor to work with every children's program producer. The
14 director has a doctorate in child psychology and years of
15 hands-on experience with programming. The editor has 10 years
16 of teaching experience. Before any educational show goes into
17 production, our Broadcast Standards director and editor meet
18 with the producer to define the educational goals and to
19 establish how they will be implemented. From time to time, we
20 also call upon outside educational consultants to work with us
21 in both planning and production. The process that we engage
22 in meets the specifically designed test. A broadcaster who
23 merely came up with a new description for a recycled
24 entertainment program would fail the specifically designed
25 test.

1 To my way of thinking, the specifically designed
2 test is a much more objective standard than is the primary
3 purpose test. It can be enforced by the Commission without
4 second guessing broadcaster program judgments. On the other
5 hand, the primary purpose standard would be entirely
6 subjective. The Commission would find itself screening
7 programs to decide whether the educational content is enough
8 to make it primary or whether the entertainment component is
9 too significant. That kind of decision making would
10 necessarily raise serious concerns of improper government
11 oversight.

12 There is another criticism of the current FCC
13 standard that I would like to discuss briefly. Some critics
14 say that serving children's social or emotional needs is not
15 really educational. They would have the FCC narrow the
16 definition so that only instructional programs would qualify.
17 They say that broadcasters can slap the pro-social label on
18 any program that is vaguely beneficial. Even if a pro
19 standard is capable of abuse at the margin, it does not follow
20 that bona fide programs that teach values or coping skills
21 lack significant educational merit. The American Academy of
22 Pediatrics has said that efforts to promote pro behavior in
23 children are essential. We agree. There are many examples of
24 legitimate pro programs that deserve educational credit.
25 Perhaps the best known is the ABC Afterschool Special. I

1 don't think anyone who has seen our Afterschool Specials would
2 quarrel with their entitlement to educational credit.

3 I would also like to touch on the subject of short-
4 form programming. The Commission would propose to reduce the
5 credit for these programs. I think that would be a mistake.
6 For one thing, the length of short-form programming is more
7 equal to what -- going back to the attention span of young
8 children.

9 MS. ELLERBEE: Thank you very much. The next person
10 is Jim Steyer, Founder and President of Children Now which is
11 a nonpartisan children's policy and media organization.

12 MR. STEYER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
13 Commissioners. I'm Jim Steyer. In addition to being Founder
14 and President of Children Now, I've also been teaching courses
15 on civil rights, First Amendment -- Children's Agency,
16 Stanford University for the past 9 years.

17 When the Children's Television Act was first passed,
18 offering a strict definition of educational or informational
19 programming seemed to many in the industry unnecessary. But
20 since then, we've seen that one person's silly cartoon can be
21 another person's educational program. And that's why we're
22 here this morning.

23 The time has come for the FCC to offer specific new
24 rules or a new policy statement revising current guidelines.
25 If problems persist despite those guidelines, the FCC should

1 consider appointing an educational committee to review
2 contested submissions.

3 The FCC's guidelines should begin by laying out
4 specific examples of the kind of programming content that will
5 clearly and unambiguously meet the criteria of the Act. One
6 example that we believe the Commission should definitely
7 encourage is more current affairs and new shows for kids.

8 Access to timely, high quality news and information
9 programming about current events is vital to the social and
10 political development of children. That need is not being met
11 today.

12 Earlier this year, Children Now convened a major
13 national conference of leading academics, children's policy
14 experts and news media leaders at Stanford University on the
15 issue of children and the news media. We conducted the first
16 ever national poll of youngsters regarding their use of the
17 news media, as well as a substantive content analysis of how
18 adult news covers children. We discovered from kids
19 themselves that when children are forced to turn to the adult
20 news media for their information, it often has a detrimental
21 impact on them, creating fear, anger and depression among many
22 young people. We also found that the mainstream news media
23 does not sufficiently address children's need or desire for
24 quality information on the issues that most concern them. One
25 of the key conclusions of our independent research and the

1 conference was that children ought to have the option of
2 watching news and current affairs programs specifically
3 designed for them. Today there's only a small bit of
4 programming that meets this particular need.

5 The networks have sponsored specials for children
6 about current affairs, but no ongoing news programs for kids
7 are available on the networks. Last year ABC announced that
8 they hoped to have such a program on the air in this fall's
9 lineup. That lineup was recently released, and no such show
10 was included. The true standouts in kids' news are on cable:
11 Linda's Nick News and CNN's Real News For Kids which recently
12 was just cancelled by Turner. Clearly, broadcasters need to
13 do far more on this -- in this area.

14 A second kind of television show that would clearly
15 qualify as educational are those designed primarily to enhance
16 children's cognitive abilities. Shows that help teach kids to
17 read or to count, that teach children geography, math or
18 science, clearly fulfill the goals of the Children's
19 Television Act. The gentlemen next to me are clearly going to
20 talk about that.

21 In addition, programs that are specifically designed
22 for kids that contribute to their affective learning are
23 important and valuable as well, but it's here that the FCC and
24 broadcasters and children's advocates run into trouble, and it
25 is here where this Commission needs to offer specific and

1 clear guidance now. Affective education teaches children
2 values and behavior. Obviously, there are many of us here
3 this morning who feel that a lot of what is on television
4 today runs the risk of teaching children negative values and
5 behavior, condoning the use of violence, promoting sexual or
6 racial stereotypes. At the same time, many programs also
7 offer positive role models for young people, and broadcasters
8 deserve credit for those shows. But the question for you all
9 is whether they deserve that credit under the Children's
10 Television Act.

11 Current guidelines state that any program designed
12 for children which furthers either their
13 cognitive/intellectual or emotional development qualifies
14 under the core programming requirements. These guidelines
15 need to be tightened and clarified. New guidelines should not
16 rule out any particular format, such as animation, drama,
17 news, or even comedy. But the critical point is that new
18 guidelines must require that any program submitted under the
19 core requirement serve a primarily educational purpose.

20 Finally, a few remarks to those here today
21 representing the television broadcast industry. The access
22 you have to our children's hearts and minds is unprecedented,
23 and the power of your influence is enormous. We all know that
24 television can and often is a time-filler for kids, and in
25 some cases can actually have a detrimental impact. But we

1 also know that television can and should be a very powerful
2 tool for learning. I know that as a parent and as a former
3 elementary school teacher.

4 Today, with the Children's Television Act, those of
5 you in the broadcast industry have the power to dramatically
6 recast the role of television in children's lives. So, I urge
7 you, fill your entertainment programming for kids with
8 positive, pro messages, yes. But you can, you can and should
9 do much more. Turn the incredible pool of talent and
10 resources at your disposal to an indisputably positive goal,
11 the education of our nation's children. All of our futures
12 depend on it.

13 Thanks very much.

14 MS. ELLERBEE: Thank you very much. Our next
15 panelist is Kenneth Werner, Senior Vice President of Business
16 Affairs and Walt Disney Television and Bill Nye, Creator and
17 Host of Disney Presents: Bill Nye the Science Guy.

18 MR. WERNER: Thank you very much. Good morning. My
19 name is Ken Werner. I'm from Walt Disney Television and I've
20 already learned something, the pressure of giving an Academy
21 Award acceptance speech with these lights. So, we'll try to,
22 to conform to the requirements.

23 I'm here today with Bill Nye, the creator, writer
24 and star of Disney Presents: Bill Nye the Science Guy. We
25 are here today as members of the creative community because we

1 are very concerned about the unintended consequences that
2 could result if the Commission adopts the proposed definition
3 of educational programming. Specifically, the Commission
4 should discard the proposal that would require that the
5 primary purpose of a program be educational with entertainment
6 relegate only secondary status. Instead, education --
7 educational programming, that includes any program that has
8 education as a significant purpose.

9 Bill Nye is with us today. His program teaches
10 fairly sophisticated scientific concepts to children in a
11 manner that they can understand and even I can understand.
12 I've asked Bill to give us a creator's opinion on successful
13 educational programming. Bill?

14 MR. NYE: Thank you, Jim. I'm Bill Nye. I'm a
15 mechanical engineer. I worked in aerospace for 10 years.
16 I've taught science to children in public schools and I've
17 appeared on programs ranging from newscasts to Late Nite with
18 David Letterman.

19 CHAIRMAN HUNDT: Bill, you're also a local boy who
20 made good. I hope that the films will recognize that.

21 MR. NYE: Yeah, I'm from Washington, D.C. -- Junior
22 High School. It's a pleasure to be here. It's an honor.

23 CHAIRMAN HUNDT: The only trouble is that in
24 Washington during most waking hours, I don't get to see your
25 show.

1 MR. NYE: 06:30 on Sunday mornings. So, I know that
2 many of you just -- you tape every week and I'll just review a
3 little bit for you. I just want to point out that anything
4 you do starts with the show. Okay. If a program isn't
5 entertaining and enjoyable for children, they won't watch.

6 So, let's watch science. Now, I love science. I
7 love teaching science. And I believe there is nothing more
8 interesting to children than science. It's about the world
9 and how it works. Our goal at the show is to present science
10 in a manner that will engage children and capture their
11 attention. It has to be fun, interesting and entertaining.
12 For example, we use music videos and scientific lyrics,
13 unusual graphics and comedy to bring science to life.

14 Now, someone recently asked me to break down the
15 entertainment and educational performance of our show into
16 percentages. And quite honestly I couldn't do it. I'm not
17 sure anyone could. But I am 100 percent certain that the
18 program is at least 50 percent entertainment. An educational
19 children's program cannot be broken down into component parts,
20 and it would be a grave mistake in my view to do so. We've
21 brought along a short clip to give you a idea of what we're
22 talking about.

23 (Video Shown)

24 MR. WERNER: Thank you, Bill. Who can compete with
25 that? It's impossible in a 1 minute clip to present a half

1 hour program but you've seen enough to understand that this
2 award winning series might flunk the Commission's proposed
3 definition because entertainment is obviously a primary
4 objective.

5 We at Disney believe one of the reasons for our
6 success is that we've always started with a creator. Does the
7 program work creatively? Is it compelling, engaging,
8 entertaining? If the answer is yes, then we know we might
9 have something.

10 The Commission's proposed rule flies directly in the
11 face of that lesson, requiring the entertainment component,
12 the entertainment value to be reduced to secondary importance.
13 The result will be an inferior product that children will not
14 watch. And the Commission will have foiled, however
15 unwittingly, the objective of the Act.

16 The Act's goal was to have broadcasting assist and
17 supplement the traditional educational process, not replace
18 it. While children may be a captive audience of the school
19 system, they are not when it comes to television. Outside of
20 school children have enormous numbers of choices each day as
21 to how they spend their free time. If the Commission adopts
22 regulations that encourage educational programming that are
23 anything short of fully entertaining and engaging, children
24 will simply choose not to watch. So long as education is a
25 significant purpose, this Commission should not try to

1 regulate whether entertainment is primary or secondary.

2 Walt Disney once said, "We have long held that the
3 normal gap between what is generally regarded as entertainment
4 and what is defined as education represents an old and
5 untenable viewpoint." We think Walt had it right.

6 Thank you very much.

7 MS. ELLERBEE: You did very well. You didn't even
8 get to your red light.

9 MR. NYE: You know, we can, we can keep going.

10 MS. ELLERBEE: Our next panelist is Margaret Loesch,
11 President of Fox Children's Network.

12 MS. LOESCH: Good morning. Thank you, Linda. The
13 Fox Children's Network has found the Commission's existing
14 definition of educational programming sufficiently motivated
15 and we have responded by developing 3 hours a week of top
16 quality curriculum-based educational programming.

17 Currently we present one curriculum-based
18 educational program right in the middle of our Saturday
19 morning lineup, Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego? The
20 significant purpose of this entertainment theory is to -- a
21 geography and history curriculum to our young viewers.

22 Carmen is produced with a production budget
23 exceeding many of our noncurriculum based entertainment
24 programs and he's been given a highly visible time period.
25 Criticisms that broadcasters spend little on educational

1 programming and vary those programs in unattractive time
2 periods simply have no relevance to our activities at Fox nor
3 to many of my peers at the other networks.

4 Beginning this fall we will be adding a curriculum
5 based educational weekday script Monday through Friday. This
6 program entitled Fox Co-Pals will be aimed at the preschool
7 children. The significant purpose of the Fox Co-Pal is to
8 teach -- entry skills, nature appreciation, environmental
9 awareness and cultural diversity, all within an entertaining
10 format.

11 Each of our educational program has independent
12 academic advisors who help evaluate, develop and supervise the
13 appropriate curriculum for each story. Our writers adhere to
14 explicit written educational goals which have been established
15 in each program.

16 In addition to our 3 hours of programming that
17 clearly meets anyone's definition of a term educational, we
18 broadcast many programs, other programs, while primarily
19 intended to entertain, nonetheless include pro and educational
20 messages.

21 In addition, we have spent millions of dollars
22 creating a broadcasting pro entertainment -- focused on such
23 topics as child safety, racial understanding, gender equality
24 and topics relating to emotional development including --
25 empathy and peer pressure.

1 When we founded FC in the 1990 we established an
2 independent Board of Advisors which includes educators,
3 psychologists, sociologists and a noted pediatrician who
4 counsel us and monitor our programming.

5 I would now like to present a brief tape which
6 presents segments from some of our educational programs in our
7 short form video.

8 (Video Shown)

9 MS. ELLERBEE: Thank you very much. Next we will
10 hear from Dr. Karen Hill-Scott, educational consultant to NBC
11 for it's 1997 Children's television schedule.

12 MS. HILL-SCOTT: Thank you. I'm testifying here as
13 an independent consultant to NBC. My academic training is in
14 child development and my professional experience in the field
15 goes back almost 30 years when I taught in the very first Head
16 Start program that came to Los Angeles County.

17 My testimony has a specific focus on definition and
18 compliance issues but the thrust of my testimony is one which
19 tempered the practical realities of changing how an industry
20 does it work against my need as an advocate to create change
21 which improves the lives of children.

22 Most of the history of broadcast television is built
23 around the nexus of commerce and entertainment, not the nexus
24 of communication and learning. The Act, if taken seriously,
25 doesn't mean that a broadcaster can simply add or modify a few

1 things to change a program. It really signals a fundamental
2 change in the way children's programming is produced.

3 To attain successful implementation of the letter
4 and spirit of the Act, it is far more important that
5 broadcasters develop approaches that merge the creative
6 process with the educative process than it is for the
7 government to promulgate unilateral rules which may be, in
8 fact, infeasible to implement. It was certainly not the
9 intent of the Act to create lowest common denominator
10 entertainment with lowest common denominator educational
11 programming. It takes a creative community to attract an
12 audience. It will take the assistance of the child
13 development community to infuse that programming with
14 educational content.

15 There's been some criticism of including emotional
16 content under the education rubric; however, for any of us who
17 live in any major urban market in this country, we know
18 developing competence, promoting inter-group tolerance and
19 instilling basic human dignity are probably very important
20 keys to salvaging our nation's future. We should not let
21 cognitive content overrule the common sense dictum to educate
22 the whole child.

23 Another issue on definition is the
24 primary/secondary between education and entertainment. I
25 think that this is unequivocally a false dichotomy. Let us

1 not forget that educators all over the country are desperately
2 looking for ways to push the envelope of schooling so that we
3 can reach disaffected learners, we can challenge brilliant
4 kids and we can prepare a work force for the future.
5 Pedantics alone are not the answer in the classroom and
6 they're not greatly effective on television either. We need
7 to balance and integrate education and informational content
8 within the entertainment vehicle. This is actually a more
9 difficult goal than meeting a primary secondary form of
10 relationship. But with a process of review and collaboration,
11 it can be attained and our overall program quality will be
12 enhanced.

13 This year NBC decided to qualify all of its
14 regularly scheduled children's shows on their new schedule.
15 As their consultant, I developed a 10-part -- definition
16 that's used as a guide for that educational and informational
17 content. Together we developed a six-part process to review
18 and documentation on every episode of every show. There are
19 10 components to the definition but in general our definition
20 emphasizes developmentally appropriate material anti-bias and
21 presentation and problem solving over dispensing facts. It
22 also emphasizes making the educational or informational
23 content integral to the plot of the story, then running it as
24 a separate or underlying message. After all, the essential
25 challenge of education to get children to recognize that what